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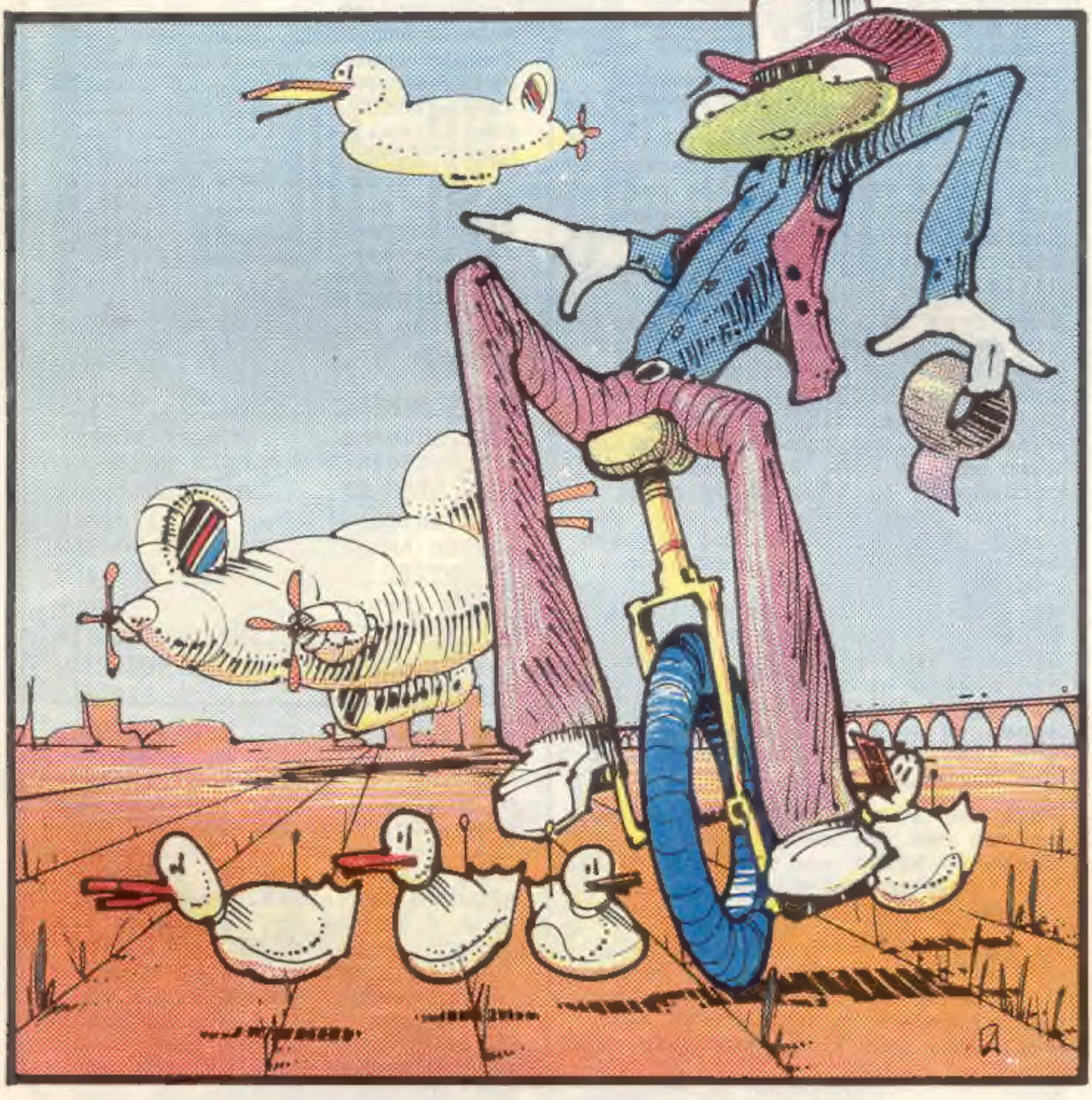

JAXON INTERVIEW

Rip Off Press just released three new trade paperbacks, THE NEW ADVENTURES OF JESUS by Foolbert Sturgeon (Frank Stack), THE CARTOON HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE by Larry Gonick, and BARON VON MABEL'S BACKPACKING by Sheridan Anderson. The Jesus book is The Best of the Rip Off Press, Vol. 3, and covers about all of the previously published Jesus comix. The CARTOON HISTORY volume has books one and two, and, like the other new books, is printed on better quality paper. Anderson's book is a very handy guide to the subject of backpacking. It's $4.95 plus 55¢ postage, and the others cost $6.95 plus postage; order from Rip Off Press, P.O. Box 14158, San Francisco, CA 94114.

This from Bill Griffith: "Zippy's bid for the nation's highest office climbs to new heights with an article in ESQUIRE (July issue) and a parade/rally in Berkeley June 6th." We know a good thing when we see one, Bill, so we're officially backing Zippy now. If you live in the Bay Area, you can tune Zippy in on the "Videowest" show every two weeks on channel 26 and channel 9, Saturdays at 11:00 pm. Griffith just finished a show of his comic art at Jehu Gallery in San Francisco, and picked up a lot of local publicity in the process. Articles appeared in the Oakland TRIBUNE, the PENINSULA TIMES TRIBUNE and the Berkeley BARB.

Phil Yeh is now finishing up work on two new softcover books, SHANGHAI WALTZ and CAZCO IN CHINA. Phil's inspiration comes from his recent visit to mainland China.

An interview with Robert Crumb and Aline Kominsky-Crumb, as well as a cover sketch by Crumb will be published in TELE TIMES #21, available for $1.50 postpaid from

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bruce sweeney talks with JAXON

CASCADE: You're certainly one of the country's foremost u.g. illustrators, could you offer a definition of what people seem to mean when they label a "comix' as underground, misnomer as that may be?

JAXON: Since the "old days," the difference between industry and underground comics have been gradually eroded. Even the spelling "comix" has been pretty much pre-empted, so that now when you read the word, you can't be sure which type of books are referred to.

With the advent of Warren's 1994, the initial gains of UG with respect to "tits N ass" and "nasty talk" have passed to the industry. I would like to think that if we hadn't done it first, Warren wouldn't have had the nerve to try it. I don't think that anyone can deny that Slow Death is the prototype for 1994.

Other books, like Heavy Metal, have reflected the looser attitude spawned by the u.g.s. Overall, this must be regarded as a healthier climate for artists and writers, and

while specific stories done will be flops by any standards, in the long run some real classics will result and they will become standards for the future, much like E.C. was for the 60's.

Labels have never bothered me. What has bothered me is that great illustrators of the past did not have the degree of artistic freedom that I would have liked them to have; the fantasies free rein, etc. These freedoms we must guard and protect, regardless of the labels placed on them, for they go to the core of creativity.

CASCADE: Being there at the beginning, you did an 8½"x11" magazine called GOD NOSE; what inspired that? How did it end up in comic book format?

JAXON: GOD NOSE was a real group effort. It resulted from the artistic ferment of Austin, Texas in the early 60's, the same ferment that gave the world Janis Joplin, Chet Helms & the Family Dog, Gilbert Shelton and the Furry Freak Brothers, etc.

The focus of this energy was the University of Texas's humor magazine, the Ranger, and its world-renowned beer busts that came after each issue was completed. Some of us also fermented things like peyote juice, extracted psilocybin, and allowed visions of sugar plums to dance in our heads. At the time, it was considered the academic thing to do, and we clutched our copies of Huxley's Doors of Perception and curvy coke bottles while cute little elephants tip-toed down escalators to the sounds of Rimski-Korsakov. We had never heard of Tim Leary and could have cared less.

Paul Krassner's The Realist was our inspiration for the state of affairs in America; Jack Kerouac, our guide to the good life. Texas was the boondocks in those days and we had our own personal, albeit limited, view of the Beat Generation. Coming on the tail of that cycle it was easy for us to slide into the Hippy Era. In Texas, the rednecks never knew the difference between them anyway, they were both "Freaks"--and to be a freak meant that you were in very real physical danger. Hence the migration of so many Texas "hipsters" to tolerant San Francisco, by the mid-60's.

SON, ARE YOU LISTENING TO THAT PROVINCIAL RUBBISH AGAIN? WHY, THAT FAKER DOESN'T EVEN TALK IN LATIN. I DON'T SEE HOW YOU CAN GO FOR SUCH SLOP! BAH!" SWINE!, ALL OF THEM..
WELL, IT'S YOUR STY, FATHER..

But before we went, we left our imprint on Texas, and the brave souls that stayed behind carried it on. I did GOD NOSE in '64 and Shelton did several WONDER WARTHOG books. He also stayed long enough to formulate the Freak Brothers epic--three crazy souls trying to survive against the establishment odds and still score their mind-altering commodities.

GOD NOSE is my own personal "dance of death" between the old Puritanic value system and the new, emerging cosmic consciousness. I was raised in the sand hills, under a hellfire and damnation variety of Baptist faith and was even groomed for becoming a preacher.

CASCADE: Wow! You, too, huh?

JAXON: Yeah, really. Obviously, I had many skeletons rattling around in my closet, and GOD NOSE was the instrument of exorcism, the rites of passage that I had to go through before I could embrace any kind of expanded consciousness. Obviously, it was a difficult passage, as my next visual offering would suggest, EXILE INTO CONSCIOUSNESS, a collection of feverish, scattered pen drawings, done in free form, without rhyme or reason, and without the meticulous structure of my later strip work.

Some have called GOD NOSE the first underground comic. Designations of this kind are, of their nature, arbitrary. When I did it, I was not aware of any technical innovation. I was only carrying the RANGER, the REALIST, ADVENTURES OF J. xeroxes, etc., one step farther. It was--and still is--an ongoing process. The fact that I had--with a lot of help from my friends--to sell GOD NOSE on the streets was a regretted financial necessity; that I had to privately print it was also a regretted necessity; but mainly it was all just good fun--another excuse to throw a big party. Strangely, after I had gotten rid of my demons (and stopped taking peyote) I found myself unable to do any more NOSE tales. It was not the sort of thing that I could do at the drop of a hat.

CASCADE: How did you become associated with the early u.g. books and publishers?

JAXON: I got into the San Francisco underground book scene through my connections with the poster trip. I was art director for the Avalon dance posters for awhile, and sitting behind my cluttered desk, managed to meet not only all the prominent artists (Mouse, Kelley, Griffin, Moscoso, etc.) but the big head shop/distributors as well. One of these, the Print Mint, was the first to shift emphasis from posters to comix. In addition to Don Schenkar's interest in handling privately-published books by Crumb, Shelton, myself, etc., he also started his own anthology, YELLOW DOG, which reminded me of a visual REALIST. YELLOW DOG, at first a tabloid, later a slicker format, was the big showcase for the infant comix community, and most of the first crop of ug artists were in there at one time or another. Other comix publishers like Rip-Off, Apex Novelties and Last Gasp were spin-offs from the operations of Print Mint and came when the scene began to gather impetus.

CASCADE: COMANCHE MOON is one of the finest books from an underground artist. What inspired it?

JAXON: I've always been a history nut. We even had a Texas history comic book used in the public school system on the junior high level. I've always been interested in "cowboys and Indians"--hard to avoid, growing up in Texas.

But what really got me interested in Quanah Parker and the Comanches was a series of 28 large pen drawings of famous Indian leaders (1600-1900) done for a coloring book published in San Francisco. These drawings were to have appeared with a facing page of text, done by Mr. Dockstader of the Museum of the American Indian, but the deal fell through. Anyone interested in doing this book? I've written the text myself.

Anyway, my interest in Indians was aroused by the project, and I managed to fit a tale, "Nits make Lice," into an issue of SLOW DEATH as a result of my research. It was a bummer, a real depressing strip, and I realized that I couldn't keep doing this kind of downer work. So I looked for a more uplifting example of the contact between the two races, and Quanah Parker was a natural. Here he was, a "half-breed" at a time when it carried the worst possible connotations and yet he managed to rise above it, to make a genuine contribu-

tion to his times and to the human race. I was suspicious--how could anyone pull it off as well as he did?--so I searched closely for flaws, for pay-offs and double-dealing, but amazingly enough, I couldn't find any. Apparently the man was true to himself, his people and truly made the best of a bad situation.

CASCADE: Could you give us any idea of how long you worked on COMANCHE MOON?

JAXON: I spent over three years working on the entire project and enjoyed it immensely. If my readers get half the "hit" that I got off it, I'll be satisfied. I wanted the book to demonstrate the wide range of possibilities of the "comic" medium. To me, the medium is tops. It can make you laugh and it can make you cry, feel guilt and pride--the whole spectrum of human emotion. You get out of it what you put into it. It can be quick and dirty, or it can be a finely wrought educational tool that gives us insight into the human predicament. The result is the measure of the artist's commitment to himself and his readers.

Personally, I like the term "illustrated book" for something like COMANCHE MOON, but labels are useless anyway. I'm content for it to be just a plain "comic book."

CASCADE: Are any of the pages renderings of existing paintings?

JAXON: Yes, a lot of my panels were stolen or lifted directly from existing work of other artists. I cheat a lot, as do most other artists. Sometimes this "swipe file" is deftly concealed, or the sources are too esoteric to be noticed, but I'll wager that most "great" artists do it at one time or another--from Frazetta right down to the lowliest. Not that it's anything to brag about, but it happens all the time and I figure you might as well be honest about it.

The trained eye will be able to pick a lot of Russell, Remington, etc., out of COMANCHE MOON. After all, there ain't that many buffalo or wild Indians running around anymore to draw from life. I figure that if you're going to swipe, might as well do it from the best, and I usually leave enough of my source intact so that there'll be no question about it. This sort of thing has been going on since the caveman paintings. It ain't new.

CASCADE: I thought I had seen a lot of Remington in MOON! How did you initially conceptualize the book--as the 3 undergrounds?

JAXON: When I set about to do something like COMANCHE MOON, or my new series about the Texas-Mexicans, I always have at least an outline in my head for the complete project. This is why the individual books don't particularly stand up well on their own--they're really just a part of the whole story, broken up arbitrarily into 24, 32 or 48 page segments. This, unfortunately, is necessary for an artist to sustain him/herself during the lengthy time that it takes to finish an "epic". It's hard to get a publisher to pay for a long, strung-out trip, and how else do you survive for three years unless you can get money, book by book? I was particularly conscious of the "weakness" of my second book of the trilogy, but it's really an essential chapter of the final result.

By the same token, RECUERDEN EL ALAMO (Remember the Alamo) will be much stronger when the second, TEJANO EXILE, is released. It's a case of the first setting the stage for the whammy of the second. Unless you know the beginning, the end loses its impact. I don't know how an artist can avoid this "segmentation" of his work, unless he's prosperous enough to lay back and "do it right"--a condition rarely found in the marketplace.

CASCADE: Do you see a similar outcome for the Texas-Mexican series?

JAXON: I want to experiment with the formula set forth in COMANCHE MOON in my forthcoming Tejano "epic". I liked the photo section, and think that this type of "reality link" to the graphic story strengthens reader identification. I've got some ideas for an appendix that I think will bring life to the strip presentation for the reader hooked on the story enough to want some real, nitty-gritty insight. It may not pan out, but I always say, "nothing ventured, everything lost."

CASCADE: There's a thin line that you're treading here. On one hand a valid historical piece is less "flamboyant" than what is common to the

UG's, yet COMANCHE MOON and the Juan Seguin tales have a lot more sparkle and Justiness than what's common in the history books.

JAXON: It is true that historical-type sagas like I've been delving into require a measure of self-censorship. This grates on my nerves sometimes and I miss letting it all hang out. It's more of a rigid discipline trip and only time will tell if it's worth it. Maybe I've mellowed too much. The truth is that I want this work to be "accessible" to a wide audience, to give young readers something real to put their teeth into--but not so real that high school librarians swallow hard before putting the book on their shelves.

And what of the older generation? Do we "avant-garde" artists exclude them from the human race? Why not give them something that they can sink their gums into? My experience has been that they love to see us youngsters telling a yarn right for a change, even though they complain that the print is too small. A lot of elderly, matronly types looked at my depiction of Cynthia Ann slashing her naked breasts, and it didn't faze them because they knew that it really happened that way in real life.

The key seems to be artistic restraint, not total self-censorship or total disregard for people's sensitivity. If the reader understands that license is necessary to what you're trying to get across, they'll usually give you the benfit of the doubt. You can't underestimate the intelligence of your readers. Artistic success is not directly related to sheer numbers but rather to the intensity of the spark that the artist kindles in his fellow man and this should cut across generation gaps, ethnic origins, and all other bullshit designations.

CASCADE: There are a lot of younger artists coming into the undergrounds (and elsewhere) today who don't get exposure to observations like yours, Jaxon. Is there any quick shot that you'd toss out to them for consideration?

JAXON: Well, I suppose. The artists today, underground or otherwise, walk a tight rope between commercial considerations and personal regard for what they do. It's kind of like Dr.

John phrased it, "walk on gilded splinters." Too much commercialization and they become prostitutes and lose respect for their work; too much freedom and they starve to death or have to take menial jobs to support their "death to the oppressor" stance. The face remains that the comics medium is a viable vehicle. Buying gas for the trip will always be a problem, not to mention roadmaps along the way, but it's still a vehicle that artists can drive to get just about anywhere they want to go.

CASCADE: How did Last Gasp and Rip-Off happen to co-produce the book?

JAXON: I was really happy that Last Gasp and Rip-Off teamed up on the production of COMANCHE MOON. The expense of producing such a book becomes less of a burden on current operations if the cost is shared, anyway. But it did my heart good to see these two outfits, who have produced so many groundbreaking titles on their own, to finally join forces on an individual project. Naturally, I hope they'll do something similar with my Juan Seguin/Tejano series; but I'm sure that that will depend on how COMANCHE MOON goes...So everybody buy one!

What it means in the long run, I think, is that the underground press has demonstrated its ability to produce a product technically on a level with the industry. COMANCHE MOON and Shelton's slick, full-color book, THOROUGHLY RIPPED, show that "underground artists" do have available to them formats to rival the well-heeled, soft-cover book publishers. It is to be hoped that fandom will support this trend.

Myself, I'll keep plugging along with whatever grabs my fancy just as long as somebody out there will buy it. I really appreciate the people who take the time to sit down and write me what they think of the direction that I'm going in. It helps a lot, working in isolation, to know what my readers think, and I value people's comments highly--even though I don't always agree with them.

CASCADE: Texas sounded pretty disagreeable back in the "good ol' days" for artists, has it changed dramatically since then? I guess I wonder why you're there...

JAXON: Texas has softened somewhat, but the recent invasion of "foreigners" fleeing the congested north has created a redneck backlash of sorts. People aren't as friendly as they used to be. But in terms of a publishing scene, it's still nowhere. Even though my recent stuff has become increasingly provincial, I still can't even get a nibble when it comes to finding a Texas-based publisher.

I came back to Texas because my roots are here and I was lonesome, not because it's particularly improved over GOD NOSE days. In many ways, it's worse.

CASCADE: How do you anticipate Texans will respond to your new series?

JAXON: I expect some antagonism because for many Texans, the war with Mexico never ended. You can catch a glimpse of this at any bordertown brothel--swaggering Anglos still putting it to the "conquered race." On a more realistic side, the rising strength of the Chicanos all over the old Spanish Southwest threatens many Anglos. They perceive it as a silent invasion, against which the old methods of resistance no longer apply. We need the labor supply, but we resent the resulting social consequences.

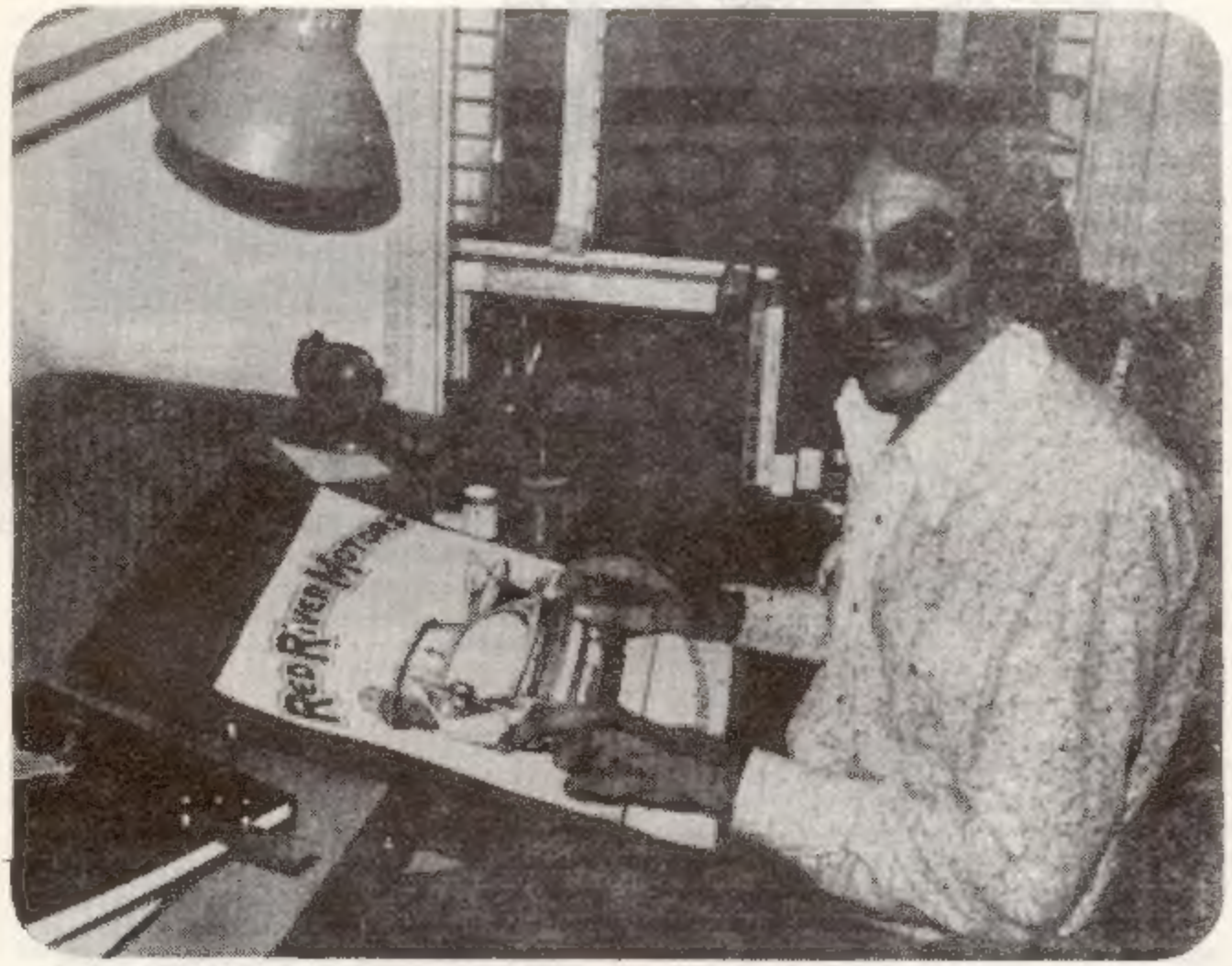
In this context--on one hand, militant Chicanos finally speaking out for their rights, heritage, language, etc., and on the other, conservative Anglos desperately bringing on their superiority myths and "boss" mentality--it is hard to see how any sympathetic treatment of a controversial historical figure like Juan Seguin could escape an emotional response from both sides.

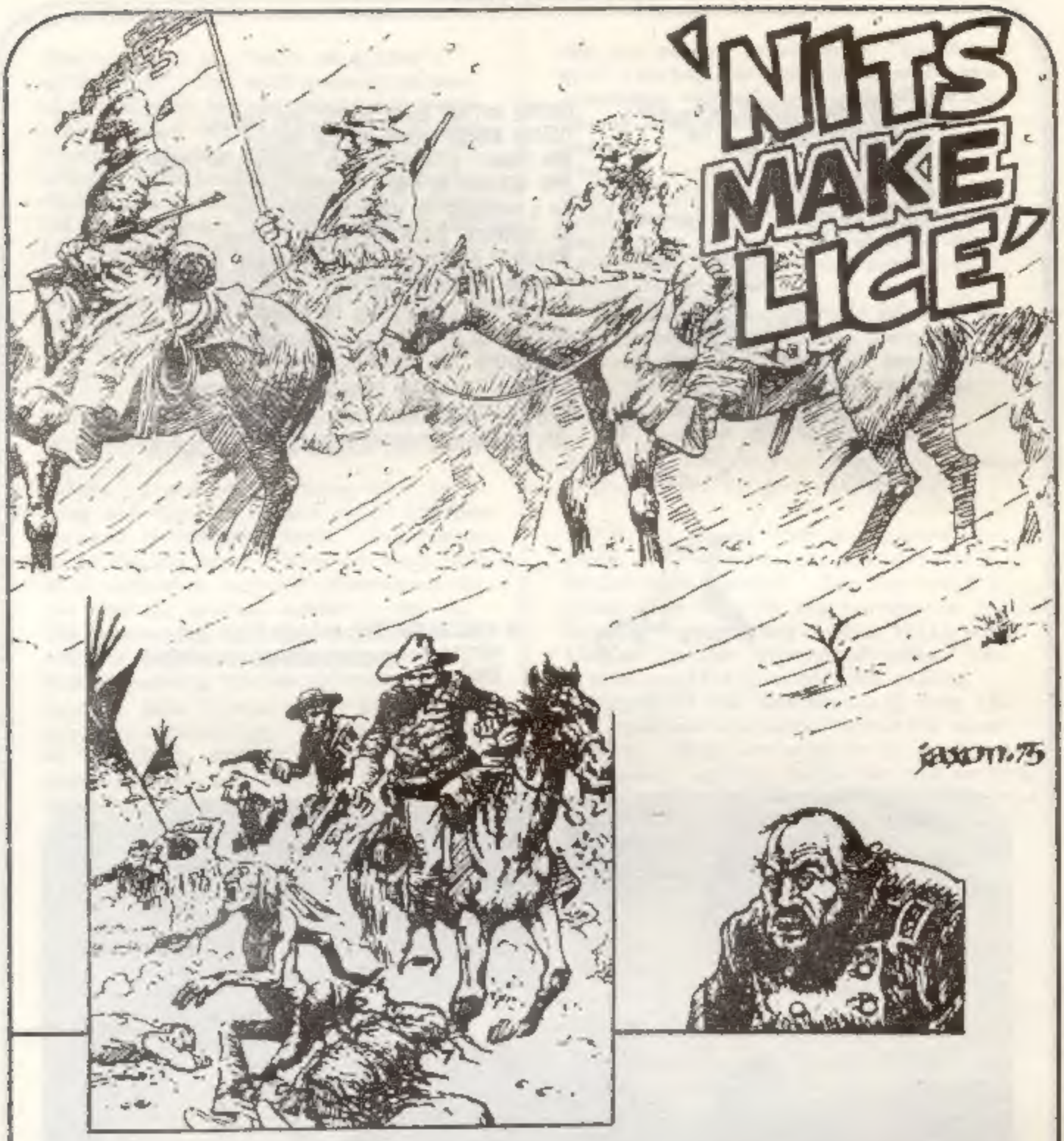
Remember that Seguin was considered a traitor by both Texas and Mexico. He, like many other former Mexican citizens after the Mexican War, was caught in the middle, and by trying to relate to both sides, lost the confidence of both.

This crisis of being caught between two worlds still applies to many modern Mexican-Americans. This is, to me, why Seguin's story, as the first to deal with this problem, has modern implications that reach far beyond the borders of Texas. But because of his unique personality, it is a story that strikes at and contradicts the official "party line" of both modern factions--the Chicano and the "tradi-

THEY'RE NOT THE BLACK MASSES, YOU FOOL..
THEY'RE EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE!
AND THERE'S A DIFFERENCE IN SLIDING IN HOME BASE,
AND STAYING IN ONE'S PROPER PLACE.
OH I WORKED SO HARD IN CREATION
TO SEPARATE EACH AND EVERY NATION.
MARKED RACE AS LIFE'S SPICE AND VIGOR...
I MADE UM BLACK BUT NOT A NIGGER.
NOW IT'S A CRITERION OF BEING "FREE"
INSTEAD OF A FASCINATIN' ANOMALY.
CHANGING THE "NOTS" INTO THE "GOTS"
SHOULDN'T INVOLVE CHANGING THEIR SPOTS.
FIE ON THEIR MIXIN' AND MISCEGENATIN'
IT'S DOWNRIGHT DEPRESSING AND AGGRAVATIN'*

* SUNG TO THE TUNE OF "OLD BLACK JOE SITTIN' ON THE LEVEE EATING A KUMQUAT PIE."





tional" Anglo. Neither side will be comfortable with the truth.

CASCADE: What are some of your observations of the current state of the art insofar as it pertains to undergrounds?

JAXON: I don't see a whole lot of great new stuff in the undergrounds. Frankly, I'm bored with dope comix. After Rand Holmes and Gilbert Shelton, what can you say? I think that Pound and Stout have come a long way, stylistically. Their covers are super. The problem is, as always, finding someone who can both draw and have something interesting to say. This is not a put-down of just the undergrounds. Thumbing through slick publications like HEAVY METAL will reveal the same problem.

CASCADE: Who else do you find provocative?

JAXON: About the only personal inspiration I get these days is from work of people like Redondo, Alcala, Nino, Nebres, etc., and this is because I love their ornate inking styles, figure drawing, epic dramatizations, etc. I consider Alcala's work on the Conan saga to be in the best tradition of the great "comic" illustrators like Pyle, Foster, Raymond, etc. I like the new life that

the French artists who pioneered METAL HURLANT put into sci-fi and fantasy illustration.

CASCADE: Do you find UGs to be softer or having less clout than 10 years ago?

JAXON: I wouldn't say that the undergrounds have "lost their clout." They broke some important ground in their early days. The question is, how long can you get bountiful crops out of the same piece of ground? Ideas restated aren't usually as powerful or exciting as the first time around. We get "ho-hum" about it. The younger cartoonists, ideally, should try to stake out some new boundaries for themselves. Imitating S. Clay Wilson isn't going to cut it.

People seem to expect new revelations every day. They want new talent to appear overnight instead of realizing that these things take years. If comix can simply survive the end of the cult era that spawned it, it will be amazing. Most vestiges of Hippiedom have not. This is a transitional stage for U.G.'s as it is for many other aspects of 60's culture. To the extent that comix continue to reflect changing attitudes, interests, etc., they will still be with us.

CASCADE: What titles have you found to be the most significant recently?

JAXON: To be honest, there are a lot of comix that I don't read anymore. On the other hand, I don't read <u>any</u> regular comics. After years of faithfully buying CONAN, I finally quit. Where are the SWAMP THINGS, the RIMAS, TARZANS, JONAH HEX, etc., of yesteryear? It's all debris in the wake of Star Wars. I mildly enjoyed Star Wars but I fear that it has sunk legitimate Science Fiction/Fantasy in triviality. Hell, Al Williamson and Wally Wood did neat technological gadgetry in the E.C.s, but it was all for mood and setting, never an end in itself. Nowadays, people seem to think that the special effects are the meat rather than just the bones.

It I was a pessimist, I'd almost think that we've exhausted all the possibilities, spun all the plots, and that's why seemingly everything we get these days is idiot-level, whiz-bang special effects that pass for substance. I tend to see myself, however, as a guarded optimist, and so have faith that the computerized cycle will focus back on the basic human condition, rather than on its toys.

CASCADE: To a degree, then, COMANCHE MOON is a rescrutiny of roots as you said, an analysis of human behavior without the trappings of current technology.

JAXON: COMANCHE MOON represents a personal turning away from "asphalt promises," in a sense. It's a return to the timeless human struggle. Critics will say that I have simply substituted feathers and bead work for gleaming chrome. I do think, however, that this book has some meat to go on the bones, besides the "special effects."

I don't know how it's selling. Probably slowly. I don't mind, though, because I tried to make it something that people will enjoy through the coming years. Naturally, sales concern me, because I want to do more projects along these lines and if it doesn't move along, it'll affect my ability to find publishers for new stuff. Volkserlag is bringing out a German edition, and a French version is in the works. I just hope that folks at home will buy it.

CASCADE: Sometimes it seems that the Europeans are more fascinated by our roots than we are; look how popular Lt. Blueberry is over there. In many quarters, we ignore some of our own best stuff only to have it rediscovered by the Europeans. Jimi Hendrix, an American, had to get started in England.

JAXON: So did Clint Eastwood and Charles Bronson. Currently, I'm really excited about my Tejano series. Juan Seguin is almost as heroic a character as Quanah Parker, and the story of the Tejanos is equally as interesting. Unfortunately, it is a story charged with emotional contemporary impact, because of the large number of Spanish-speaking people within the United States. This is something of a headache--interpreting the past to modern outlooks and prejudices--but it also is more of a challenge. I'm trying to present the story objectively, but it's bound to step on someone's toes. The bookstore at the Alamo returned the copy that I gave them of book #1 without comment. If this relatively tame treatment was too much for them, wait until they see <u>Tejano Exile</u>! ●

In Praise of BAREFOOTZ

By Bill Sherman

Among comix readers, admitting that you like "Barefootz" is about as cool as admitting that you like nose hair. Say it in a large enough crowd and you're liable to be met with withering stares suggesting that your time'd probably be better spent studying back issues of Little Dot. For some reason Howard Cruse's shoeless Joe has become a symbol of ersatz undergroundwork, a sneerworthy shadow of the genuine article. "Bankrupt," one critic calls it and a chorus of torch carriers starts bobbing its heads in agreement. Definitely an aesthetically risky business, this Barefootz fandom.

Well, I've liked a lot of bankrupt items in my time, but I wouldn't class Cruse's strip among 'em. I can see why so many comix fans hold that line, but to my mind they're elevating form over content in doing so. Granted the strip's form--the slick round-eyed rendering, the borrowings from overfamiliar modern strips (as opposed to hipper sources like the ECs or archaic newspaper strips), the reliance on identifiable vaudevillian jokework--tends to foster the image of safe commercialism that is supposedly antithetical to the underground. But to say that such outward trappings are the sum of Cruse's strip is like typing Crumb on the basis of his early Help! cartoons.

Cruse has his faults, but he's frequently funny from a perspective that can only be found in the underground. Hip newspaper strips like "Doonesbury" may be able to joke about drugs and gayness, but they have to do so from a forced objective perspective They never can quite give the impression that the cartoonist him/herself has (perish forbid) actually experienced the Modern World: newspaper stips aren't that ready for the Modern World. (Neither are most newspaper readers.) Cruse obviously knows whereof he jests, has had his personal sexual confrontations and hallucinations, and can draw a smirking chair with the best of 'em. At least the last time he drew one it looked exactly like a smirking chair I remember seeing once.

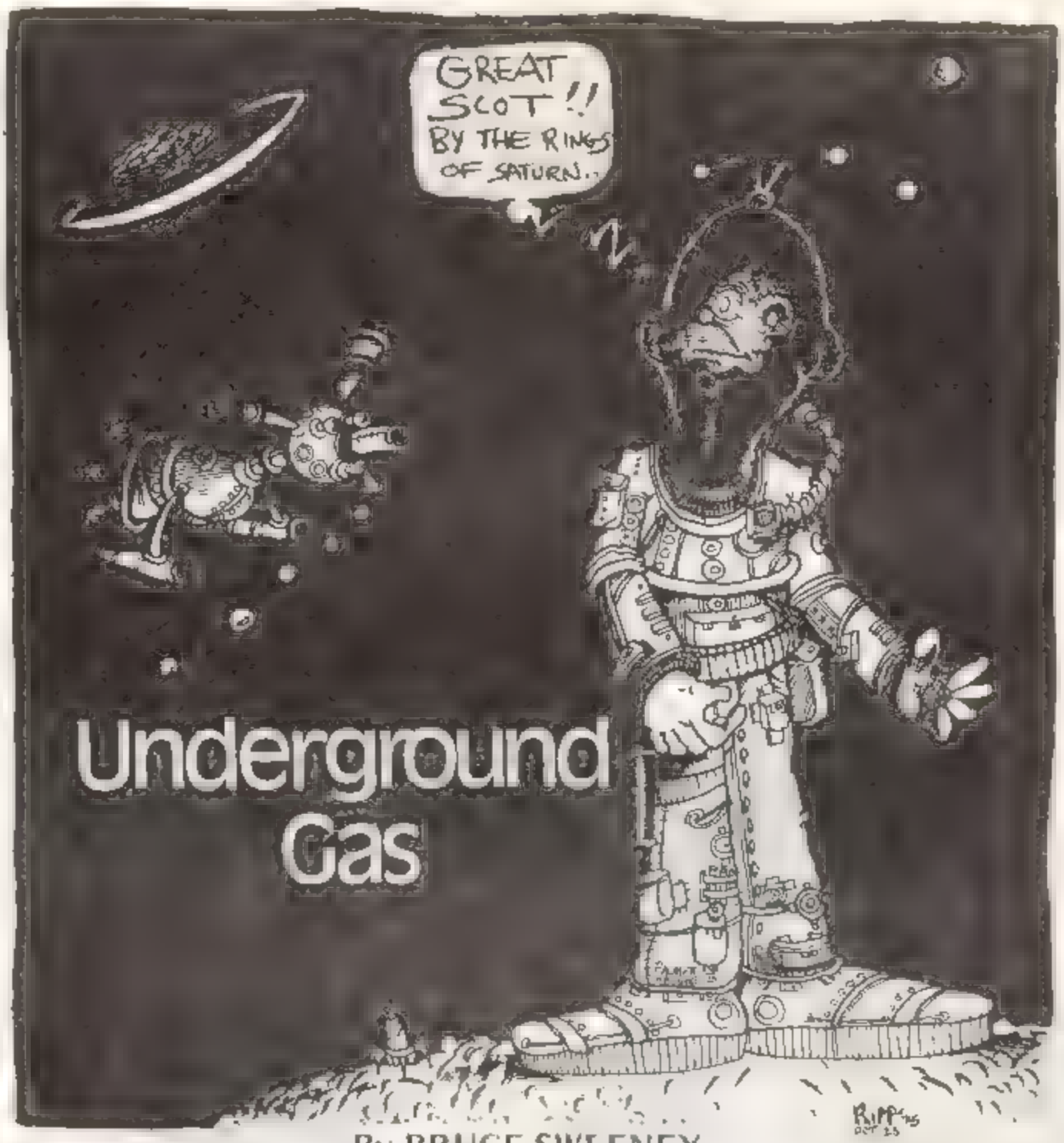
Much of Cruse's stripwork is pure fantasy foolery, sure, but in depth it's not all that different from other cartoonists' Big Butt fantasies. And Cruse's moments of whimsy seldon disturb his attempts at tackling material with a darker undercurrent. Where Cruse the humorist most falls down is in his strip's most traditional relationship: the Lucy/Schroeder frustration jokes of Dolly and Barefootz's comically vague relationship. I remember a rape joke that was expecially slim (though it might've been funny if Cruse'd given it to one of his roaches) but as a whole the pair's sexual duologues have never been more than a type of joke as opposed to a reflection of experience. I don't know what kind of experience Cruse has gone through to come up with a creation like Glory, but the creature is more convincing than Barefootz and Dolly's sexual bond. Which is one reason I suspect Cruse has focused on it less as his strip's progressed.

In any event, despite some flubs, the world of Barefootz is as accurate a comix mirror as any we've gotten, no

more or less legitimate than any of the greyer settings other artists've given us. Cruse may Draw Cutesy, but the contrast between that cutesiness and the frantic comic desperation of his main cast is one of the strip's main tensions. The best instance of this in action is Cruse's gay artist Headrack (name another male comix artist who's able to handle gay characters as anything other than punching bags or limp-wrist fops). Headrack has received more focus in the strip as it's progressed and with good reason: he's one of Cruse's best characters, a sixties survivor who gets emotionally battered by both his middle-class background and his dreams of being an artist. The most recent Barefootz book, number three, shows Headrack going through a latenite artist's block, and the sequence is done with an exactness and dark wit that is particularly impressive--Cruse recalling the scratchiness of bedsheets when sleep is an ineffective escape. (Headrack thinking of how far Gone he's gotten pursuing his ambitions of becoming a painter: "I can't even qualify for a fuckin' Bank Americard!").

This and the issue opener, "Barefootz Variations," are the two best pieces Cruse has done yet, a hopeful indication that the artist's growth hasn't ceased yet. In "Variations," modeled after Crumb's stream-of-consciousness strips with a bit of Spiegelman's "Ace Hole" layout, Cruse even answers his critics by both giving into them and fighting them, drawing his characters and himself in a variety of stylized forms that support contrasting contentions. It's a dazzling balancing act, no less heartfelt for skill with which it's presented, and if there were any justice, its appearance alone would have the strip's critics thinking twice before dismissing Cruse as trivial. But I doubt if it's enough. Perhaps if Barefootz took his tie off. . . ●

I WONDER... CAN THESE DAMES BE AS 'GREAT' AS THEY SAY..?
NOT ALWAYS, DOLLY— BUT THEY'RE GENERALLY ABOVE AVERAGE!
HI, THERE.. JESUS SENT ME!
THE END



By BRUCE SWEENEY

Wayne Gibson is threatening to publish again except that this time it sounds even better than Transit or Cover, his two earlier numbers. He's being joined by a formidable line up of artists that will possibly make this a well-done new wave representation which is always an exciting possibility. It's tentatively named Kootchie Koodle Comix; not to be confused with the Robert Williams' 1970 masterpiece, Cootie Cootie Men's Comix.

I always thought that the 70's personality consisted of smacking one's lips over how cool the 60's were while simultaneously improving on several cultural developments including coimx and rock n' roll. (come to think of it, the grass got stronger... or so I hear...) The innocence drifted off somewhat but the actual execution got often tighter and cleaner. In comix at least, last year was overall, fairly productive for a few good items The Mondo series started, as did the Cartoon Histories, Jaxon kept his Comanche Moon in motion, the Bizarre Sex line and the Slow Death line kept a solid high quality and there were several presentable individual projects that really did very well.

Valentino is up to his earstwhile self, contacting artists and discussing new titles, projects and schedules His material recently appeared in Pure Sex #2 which is available from Tom Brinkman, 4 Cranberry Dr. Islip, N.Y 11751. Valentino's strip in our own

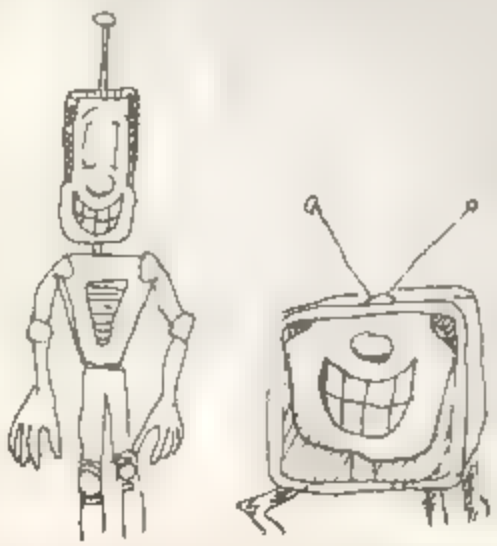
Cascade #20 was really very good. Pure Sex #2 is a giant step forward from the humble yet sincere P.S. #1. That was fun; this is fun and good. Brinkman's cover and inner art is entirely different from his material in # 1. Personnally, I enjoy both but P.S.# 2 features Brinkman, Valentino, some excellant Brad Foster, Chas Schneider, Melissa, Wayne Gibson, Jamie & Kelly Alder, & Rick McCollum.

Near Myths #5 is an absolute necessity. It features art by Trina as well as Bryan Talbot and Hunt Emerson. Its probably available thru Monkey's Retreat in Columbus, Ohio and is everything that I'd hoped that Star Reach would have been

Heavy Metal is just about worth the subscription, if you're up for more opinion but I would wager that its slight overemphasis on serialization does it some damage at the nestand.. I feel that one or two "to be continued"s is fine; but anything beyond that is a bit much to try and stay on top of for a month. Shit, I can hardly devote more than 2 separate nights for serialized drama, much less try to keep 3-4 story lines in the back of my mind for a month..Hey, its no skin off me; my sub was a Xmas present.

Hogwash is a new ug 'zine from John Mahomet and its o.k. but I happened to note a piece of his self-designed notepaper that he'd had printed and it was really very good. His rendering of a Greek orthodox (?) Church was excellant. He claims to be at work on another book which he hopes to get out this summer called 'Alien Nations', an X-rated space story which will retail for $2

If I haven't mentioned it yet, Honky Tonk Sue #2 is out done by Bob 'Boze' Bell of 707 W.MacKenzie Phoenix, Az and its a great sequel



to H.S.S. #1. Its a crazy book and you wont want to miss it..He has some fantastic T Shirts in 4 color that are also available.

Rip-Off has printed "Back-packing" written and illustrated by Sheridan Anderson who looks so much like a cross between Shelton and Gonick that its eerie. Nevertheless, the book is fun and informative. Gonick has his Cartoon History paperback out and so does Foolbert Sturgeon with his new, "New Adventures of Jesus" book, and of course, Last Gasp's Recuerden El Alamo is just fantastic by Jaxon, who is always one of the remarkable greats.

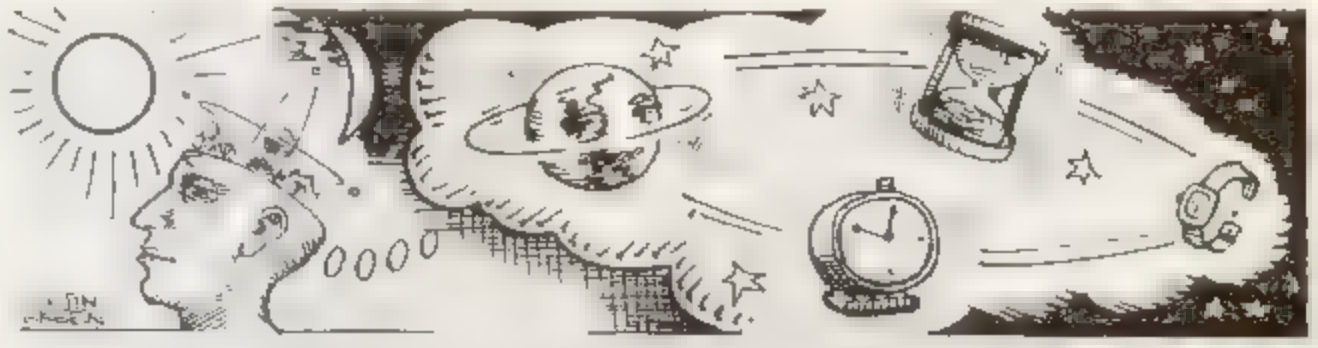
Kitchen's 1st squareback book will be an all Eisner issue

Doug Bryson has just graduated from school and has full-color Captain Retro T-Shirts available for $6 pp. Not only will your clothes be fun but it'll also be a collector's item. Try him at 5111 N.I. 35, #110, Waco, Texas 76705. I haven't received mine yet, so I can't actually review it for you, but how could I face the summer without one?

Book of Art #6 is out from Dan Taylor and this time the mini-comix features Walt Rogers and Tim Fuller. They are 50¢ each form Dan at 1833 Guntle Rd., New Lebanaon, Ohio 45345.

Alex Tamsula's Western Romance is also out for 50¢ each.

There is an obscure "Up form the Pitts" title that I was lucky enough to get form a friend. Its

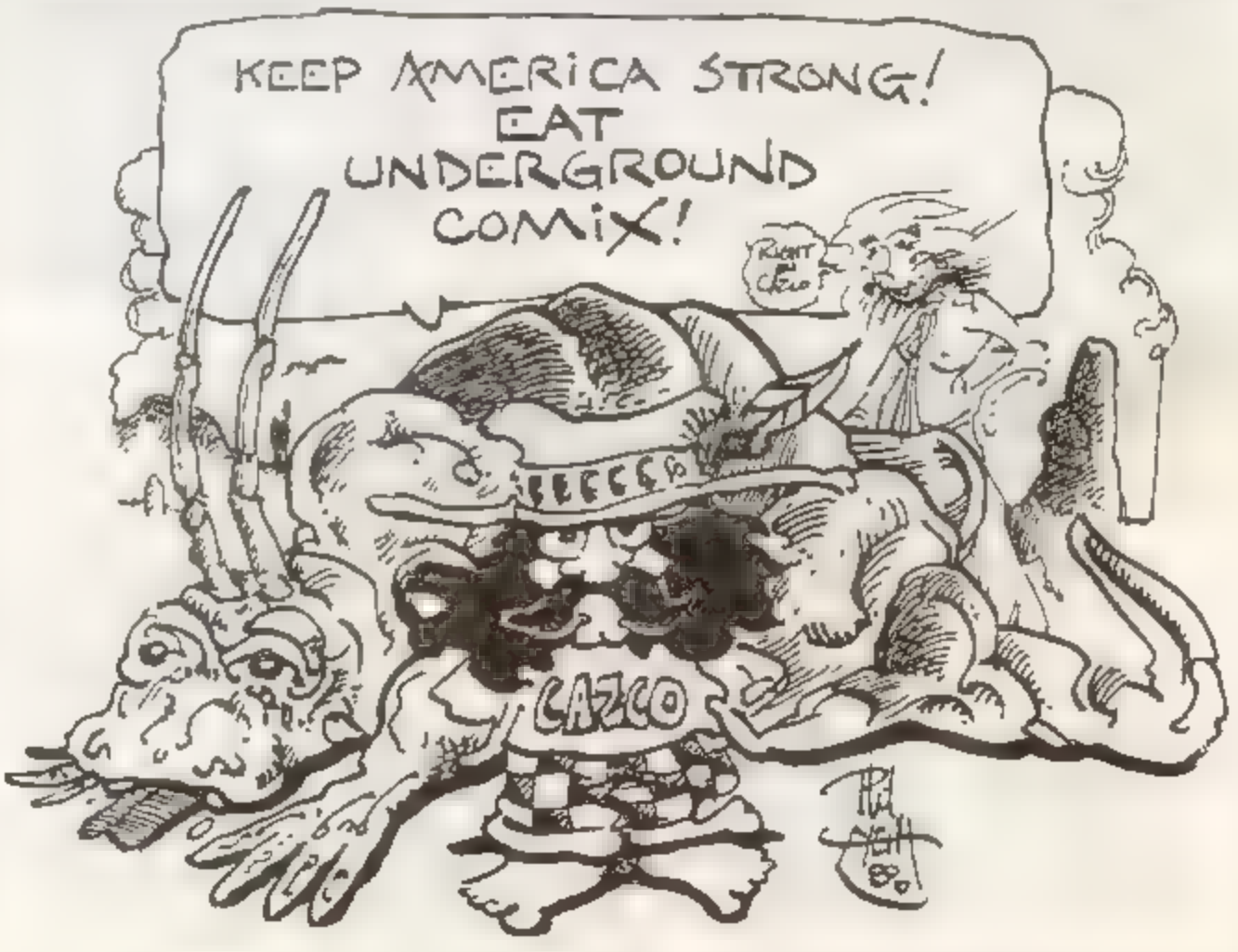


really raw stuff (love that raw stuff') from Pittsburg and I'm in the process of trying to track it down but its so far a red light Hopefully, more on that later.

As you've probably seen, Sheri Flenniken is very busy with National Lampoon, she was in the May issue June High Times featured a 1-page Kim Deitc 4 color strip and of course, ran a 1 page strip of everybody's favorite pinhead

Certainly my nicest acquisition of late is the English book, Masters of Comic Art done by P R Garriock and printed beautifully in Italy The book is in English and feaures great material You might write to Auram Press Limited, 27 Floral St , London WC2, England Its a square back 9"X12" with high gloss and conta ns material by Eisner, Katzman, Bellamy, Crumb, Corben, Barry Windsor-Smith, Giraud, Druillet, Wood & Moscoso. The editing and general presentation is just about breath-taking. I don't have a price on it its5 pounds sterling and you might inquire through Galaxy Media, 40 Crosscauseway, Edinburgh, Scotland Perhaps it will be picked up by Monkey s Retreat or Sidebottom or Bud Plant, but high price or no, it is one hell of a good-looking book for those that can afford it.

"I woulda ran (if I da known)" is 75c pp from Jerry Goebert, 125 S Main St., Greensburg, Pa 15601 Myron Mercury who contributed to California Cockroach Comics will have "The Probable Origin of a Species" available June 1 for $1 pp from him at P.O. Box 1311, Oakland, Ca. 94604. Hopefully, I'll get more on that later



NEWS, cont'd from page 2

Bruce Duncan, Berkeley Inn Hotel, Room 414, 2501 Haste St., Berkeley, CA 94704. Duncan's magazine is usually a xeroxed street paper with some comix.

J. Michael Leonard just sold a three-page strip to PLAYBOY. It's called "Marywanna Brownie" and should appear later this summer.

Mary Wagner of New York City has been producing a comix series entitled "Jungle Funnies" (see page 27 for a taste). It's been picked up by Dargaud in Paris, but so far there have been no takers in the U.S. Mary uses the pen name of "Mama Dog."

HEAVY METAL won't be renewing their reprint contract with METAL HURLANT because of problems with the French publishers. Ted White, who edits the U.S. magazine, reports that French work will still be used, but they now have the option of picking up more comix by American U.G. cartoonists. Ted met Rand Holmes at V-Con in Vancouver, B.C. recently, and invited him to submit work. Both of these gents are slated for interviews in CASCADE, starting with Ted White in #22.

Errata: The address for The SubGenius Foundation was incorrectly listed in last issue's "New Wave" column. Their THE WORLD ENDS TOMORROW AND YOU MAY DIE should be ordered from P.O. Box 140306, Dallas, TX 75214.

THE FIRST KINGDOM book 12 is now out, order for $1.75 postpaid from Bud Plant, POB 1886, Grass Valley, CA 95945. Their catalog costs $1, and that's refundable with your first order. Jack Katz' epic comix series is now nearly half finished.

50's FUNNIES is new from Kitchen Sink, with stories by Scott Shaw, George Erling, Tom Yeats, Alcala, Will Meugniot and others.

Griffy's San Francisco art show was accompanied by the publication of a mini-comix catalog. It's $3.00 by mail from Jenu Gallery, 2719 Bush St., San Francisco, CA 94115, is all comix, and is signed by Bill Griffith. Be sure to ask for a copy of the full-color postcard when ordering.

Continued on page 20

OUR TWELFTH ANNIVERSARY YEAR #4/80

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*1994 #1,2,5,6,7,8,10,11,12-$2.50 ea.
*WEIRDWORLD Set of 3(#11,12,13)-$7.50(Set)
Warriors of the Shadow Realm,Marvel)

[illegible]-1st eds.)
ALL STARS #1-10 (1976;Griffin,Crumb,etc.)
APEX TREASURY OF UNDERGROUND COMICS-$8.95
ARTSY FARTSY FUNNIES-$6.95
RICHARD CORBEN'S FUNNYBOOK-$20(Hardbound)
ARMADILLO COMICS #2(1971)-$5.00
BARBARIAN COMICS #4-$5.00 (Jaxon,etc.)
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CARLOAD PREVIEW bound-in;Color)
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Wilson,Crumb,Moscoso;Crumb Cover)
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THRILLING MURDER-$5 (Crumb,Osborne,etc.)
TRASHMAN-$5.00 (1970,Tabloid;Spain)
UNEEDA COMIX-$8.00 (1970,Crumb)
WEIRD FANTASIES #1-$5.00(Corben,etc.Color)
XYZ-$5.00 (1972,Crumb)
YOUNG LUST #3-$10.00 (Full Color)

NEWS, cont'd from page 17

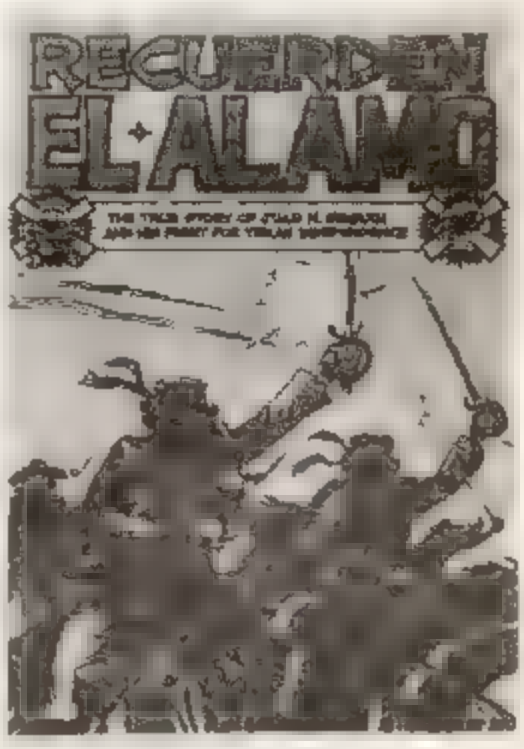
Everyman Studios is currently accepting material for several projects. Bruce Sweeney has been editing a dope-oriented comic book for publication later this year. The mini-comix series just keeps rolling along; artists interested in participating should send for Update #5, which gives all the info. There will be another all-comix issue of CASCADE soon, for which contributions are now being taken. Those who want to send work for CASCADE can ask for our contributors' guidelines. Everyman will also be expanding our line of rubber stamps soon, and an informational flyer is available to artists wishing to do stamp art.

Guy Colwell is having yet another exhibit, this time at Nanny Goat Hill Gallery, 3205 Polsom St. (near Army), San Francisco, from May 30 until June 22. The hours are Thurs.-Sun., 1-5 p.m. Gallery shows are the thing now for cartoonists, and if you live in the Bay Area you can catch a lot of them.

Trina is doing a lot of new comix for NATIONAL LAMPOON these days.

Still working as a sign painter, Justin Green has done some leaflets for Duck's Breath Mystery Theatre of late. He's also involved in a video project.

Etchings are Larry Rippee's current artistic pastime, but he has no plans to turn to a life of "fine art." A couple of his new prints are on exhibit in San Francisco's Printmakers' Gallery this month.●



underground comix SALE

Air Pirates 1 (g) 5
Armageddon 1 1
Austin Comix 2
Beer #1 7
Bijou #2(g-vg) 7
Bizarre Sex #2(2d) 5
Bull6 '75 ug magazine 5
Bull8(" , 8½x11 ") 5
Bogeyman 3 5
All Stars 2 12
Barn of Fear 1
Blood,Sex & Terror 2(Eng) 5
Captain Guts 2 5
Comix Internat'l 4 4
Claw Comix 1('77 fanzine) 3
" " 2 3
Christmas Comix 5
Committed (Eng.) 5
Choice Meats 1 5
Cosmic 6 (Eng.) 3
Dutch Treat 1
Dan O'Neil Vol 2#1 3
" " Vol2#2 3
Dopin' Dan 1 2
Eternal Tales 7
Funnybook 2 2
Fever Dreams
Fark
Famous Potatoes 1
Feds n' Heads 1st g
First Kingdom 1
" " 5
" " 7
Fleshapolds from Earth
Googlewummer
Greaser 1
Greaser 2
Gordelier(aka Armadillo #3)
Grimwit 2
Good Jive 1
Graphixus 1
Graphixus 2
Gopher Freedom
Gory Stories 2½
Gooz
Ghost Mother
Hollywood Fats
Hydroger Bomb (1st)
Hydrogen Bomb 2nd
Honky Tonk Sue 1
Honky Tonk Sue 2
High School/Mountain

Insect Fear 2
Komma Kazi
Kum + Go
Knee Deep
Kanned Korn (g)
K-tzmar Komics
Lemme Outta Here
Left Field
Little Green Dinasaur
Mothers Oats #2 (g)
Melotoons
Moon Comix #2 (Eng)
Mad Peck Catalogue 4
Moondog
Mr. A
Magic Carpet 2
Mr. Infinity
Middle Class Fantasies
New Paltz 1
New Paltz 2
Ogoth + Ugly Boot (Eng.)
Orgasm Review
Little Annie Yannie
Positive Feedback (g) Eng
Pure Sex 1
Purple Warp 16
Quoz
Real Pulp #2
Program or (22 art sts)
Realm 5 fanzine
Rowlf (1st)
S. Clay's C+S
Sphinx
Skull 2
Skull 3 (g)
Slow Death 1 (white border)
Slow Death 3
Street Comix (Eng)
Spasm
Three Fisted Tales
Tasty #2
Tales of Ozone #2
3-D Deep Comix
Teenage Trash
Teenage Horizons Shangria 2
Tooney Loons
Telegram Sam
Uncle Jo don's C+S fanzine)2-4
Vibratory Provincial News
Up from the Deep
Venture 4.('75 fanzine)
Voltar 1

Worm 2
Whole Wheat 4
Whole Wheat 5
Who Took the Drugs?
Yow 1
Yang Dust 1
Yetzenl 3 (class proze
Yellow Dog 13
Yellow Dog 18 (g)
Zap 0
Zap 1
Zap 2
Zap 3
Zap 4
Zap 5
Irresistable Silver Screen
I am
UnderGround Digest 2
(reprints Crumb & Yarrowstalk submission)
Comix

Kazoo 1 + 2
Western Romance
Sweet Cheecks
Zipatunes (rare Spe gelman)
Deadlines
Heartbreaks & Mutants
Acne Pimples
Notes on Seeing God
Its a Mystery (super rare
Erling
Cunt
iz
Robot Fields

Tabloids

Austin Enquirer(
Berkeley Barb (great Holmes
Harold Hedd streaking cover)
Trashman
Earthworm (very hard to get)
Seattle Simpleton 1-3
San Diego Comic Con '79
Last Toque (great metzger!)
Sunday Papers 1-7 (strictly
comix involved no news
.O. 3 '70 color Crumb cover,
comix issue w/Spain,Yossarian,
Node, Deitch
Kirkwood Times Corben Cover)
Yarrowstalks 1
Air Pirates tabloid
Gothic Blimp 4 (g) spine wear
Gothic Blimp 7 (g) " "
Kiss #12('70?)Deitch + Mad Peck. A NYC sex tab.
Sufi Times (G. Metzger)
Frezno Funnies #2
Extra (Mad Peck +Justin Green)

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BRUCE SWEENEY, 82 WALT
BOSTICK VA

I could use some help on a project, gang I'll be on the coast this summer & I could use some solid recommendations of good books for summer reading. I enjoy adventure & would personally recommend Shogun or Great Train Robbery but I could use some suggestions 5% off to contributors

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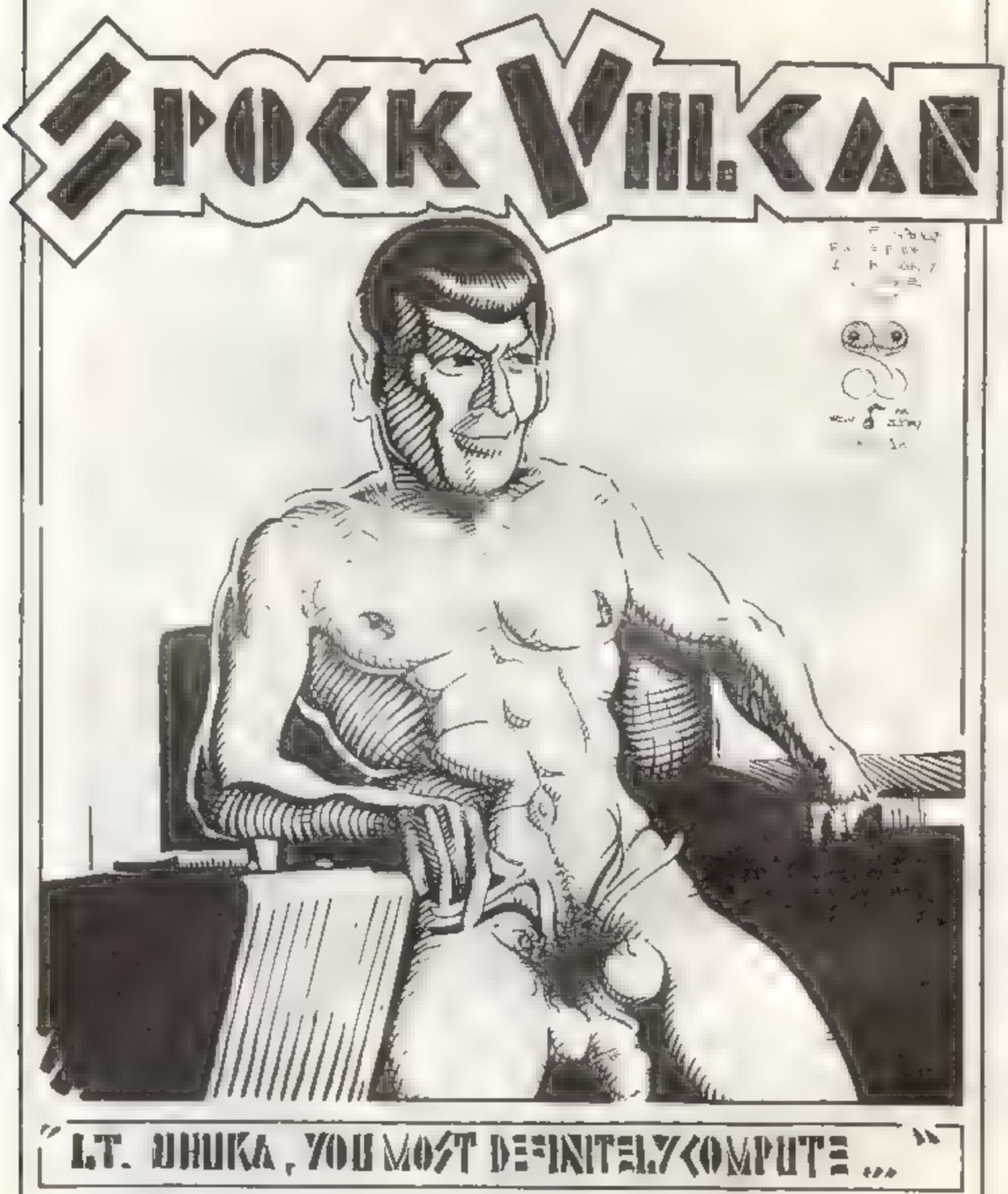
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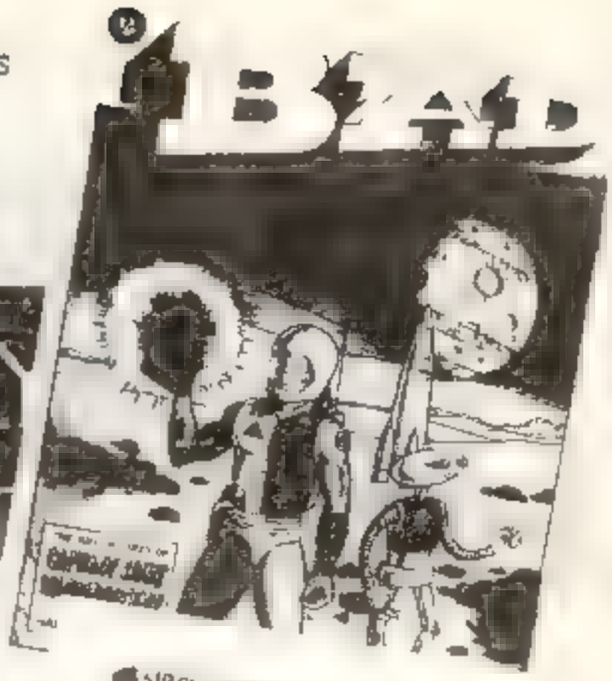

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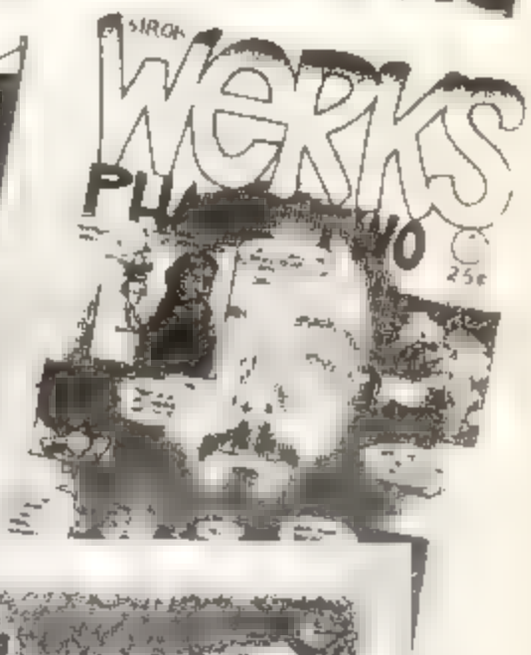

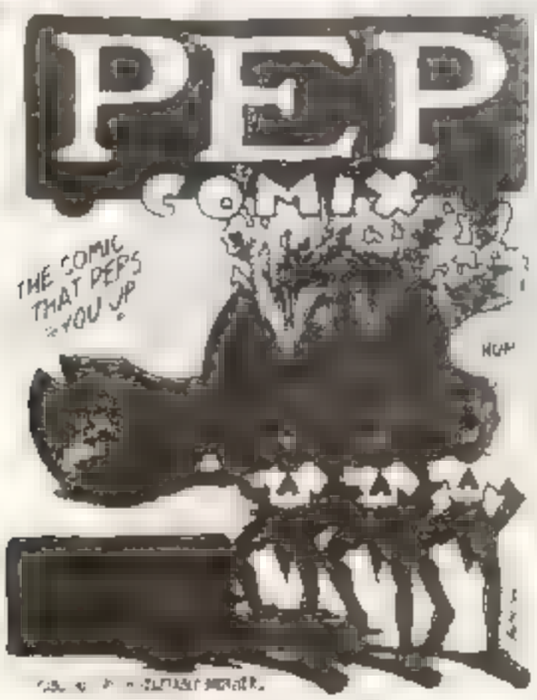

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"Underground" Comics?

BRUCE SWEENEY

There has been discussion aired recently relative to the acceptability of the term "underground" as it applies to the style of comix that are published for adults only and feature such talents as Robert Crumb, Gilbert Shelton and Denis Kitchen.

I am not sure that the title is all that erroneous. It certainly is true that they have evolved past the point where they are truly underground in the original sense. During their inception in the middle and late sixties they were often shunned by comic book stores, newsstands and other usual distribution outlets due to the taboo subject matter and the often liberal or anti-establishment positions presented.

They were indeed hot to handle and there is far too many a horror story about busts in obscure communities and outcries of pornography from the right wing. The parallel between their harassment and the harassment of the Wertham witch hunt of the '50s against the E.C. line and other comics is of course obvious and evident. It's the overreaction to that conservative influence that has saddled a generation with such lackluster reaction to social issues that the undergrounds have reacted to.

Due to distribution, content, and presentation during the Nixon era, the undergrounds earned their name and it was a good degree more appropriate then than now. However, grousing over the applicability of "underground" now is somewhat akin to pissing into the wind. Time has indeed moved forward and there are plenty of albums in record store bins marked Folk Music that feature horn sections, a phenomenon never possible ten years ago. What do we do about folksinger Bob Dylan playing rock music these last years? And feature length Cartoon movies for adults? Unheard of! For that matter, what is 'comic' about Conan or Kull? How dare social art move forward out of its specified boxes?

Certainly Robert Crumb is no longer cranking out private fanzines and the undergrounds are far from clandestine comics handed out at SDS meetings or passed out on streetcorners, but they are still primarily true to form. The only comics dealing with contemporary issues as far as taking a stand are the undergrounds. Titles

still flourish today taking Big Business to task such as CORPORATE CRIME 1 and 2; SLOW DEATH #8 dealt with the Greenpeace Movement, SLOW DEATH #9 deals with medical issues such as cancer and radiation; ALL-ATOMIC COMICS confronts the nuclear issue; GAY HEARTTHROBS 1 and 2 deals with gay issues; CLASS WAR COMICS is about socialist commune life in England, and we are starting to see far more comix dealing with the woman's point of view expressed thru the undergrounds than thru the straight comic book.

Rather than the hippy tone of the early undergrounds, these titles are mature adult presentations that stimulate and express. The material is done by people who have come of age in the 60's and 70's and who still care about using graphics as adult treatises. The squawk that undergrounds are concentrated on sex and violence is just not justified. The truth of the matter is that the undergrounds, while indeed laboring under a misnomer, have evolved and grown.

Today's underground is a direct evolution of their earlier efforts. They have changed; the times have changed. In fact many titles have moved a lot further in maturity than their safer comic book counterparts. The question should not be whether the name is appropriate, but whether the readership can keep evolving along with the undergrounds. ●

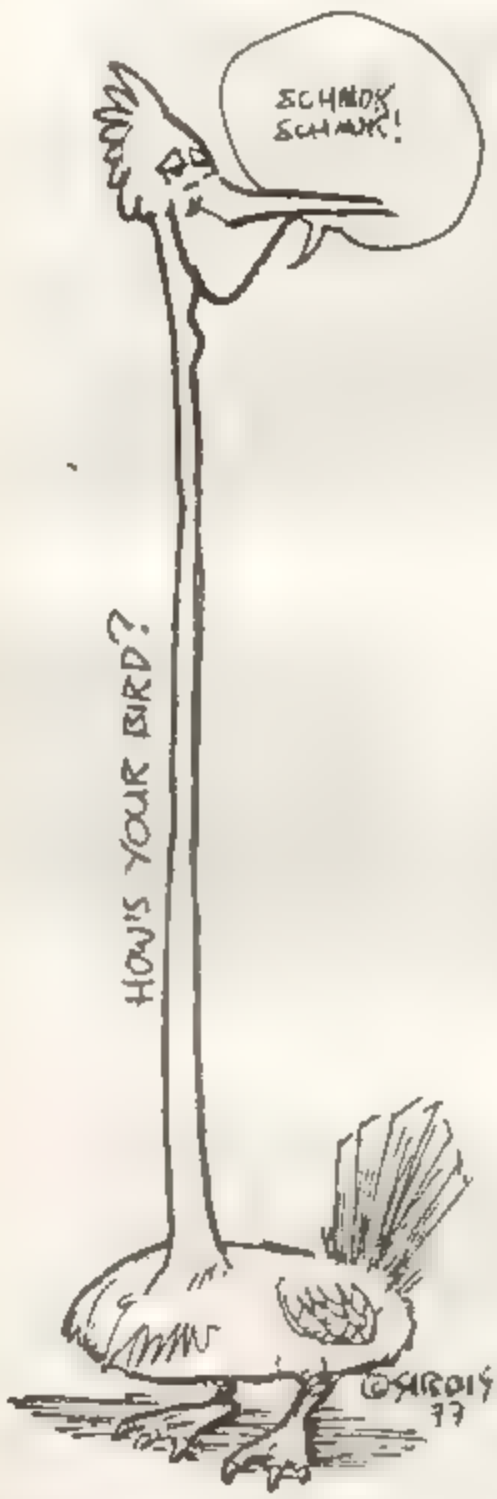
--Bruce Sweeney

by Artie Romero

DEATH (no price given, mark beyer, pob 2304, allentown, pa. 18100) limited to 300 copies, mini-comic, 2-color throughout, signed by artist beyer.
FIRST KLASS KOMIKS (50¢, valentino, 11900 oertley cir., garden grove, ca. 92641) 200 copies of this digest 8-pager by valentino were recently printed. "belladonna" story therein will be reprinted in dope comix #4, valentino's first pro sale.
OVERLOAD #2 ($1.75 ppd., don chin, 1951 quaker st., eureka, ca. 95501) 8½ x 11" fantasy/sf comix with 2-color covers; heavy

on the mobius and bode riffs; artwork by parsonavich, chin, mills, sam wray, schreck.
PROTOPLASM '97 #2 (no price given, terry a. kaegin, 202 s. walnut, la grange, ky. 40031) comix by kaegin in digest format, captain carmal adventures, tits. when writing for price info ask about other comix available.
ELECTRIC PETE COMIX #3 ($1.50 ppd., electric pete studios,

pob 962, newark, nj 07101, sent 1st class) pete silvia comix in digest 36 page format.
PAPERS (50¢ + 20¢ postage, osun center for the arts, 2541 E. 75th st., chicago, il 60649) tab with heavy comix slant. strips by yaounde olu, ken hunter, epsi eph, others. cosmic. 8 pages.
GARBANZO COMIX (75¢ + a stamp, harry onickel, 16075 harden cir., southfield, mi 48075) 16 page mini by onickel, his first. 1st printing, 300 copies.
NOT AVAILABLE KING-SIZE ANNUAL #1 (THE INVASION OF EARTH), and #2 (ARNIE ARNOLDS, SPACE CADET) (no prices given, matt feazell,



17 s. euclid #3, st. louis, mo 63108) good loose comix by feazell, 6 pages each, xerox. shows real promise.
SKELETOONS and CONCEPTION (25¢ each, everyman studios, 432 s. cascade, colorado springs, co 80903) solo 8-page mini-comix by larry rippee and valentino, respectively. color covers.
MORE POTATOES and SAMYANG RAMYON (15¢ each, plus a stamp; everyman, address above) solo micro-comix by artie romero, 2¾ x 4¼". 12 pages each w/ color covers. ●

ATTENTION, CRUMB AND KOMINSKY FANS!
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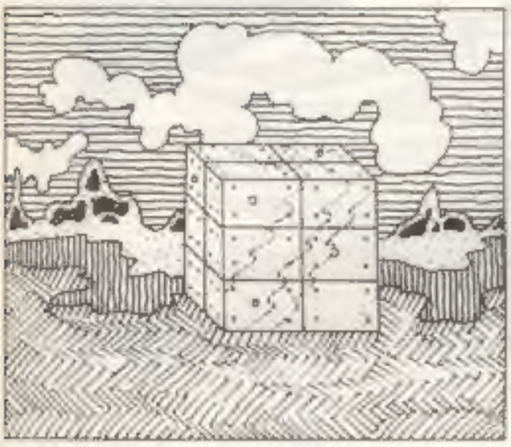

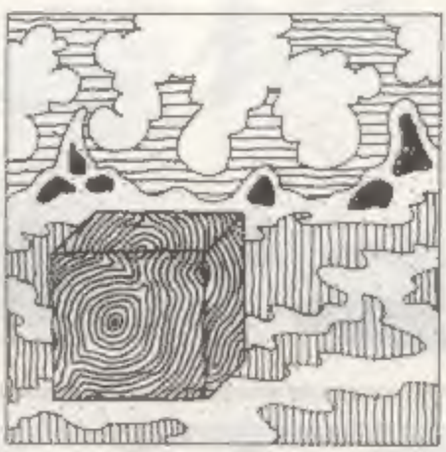

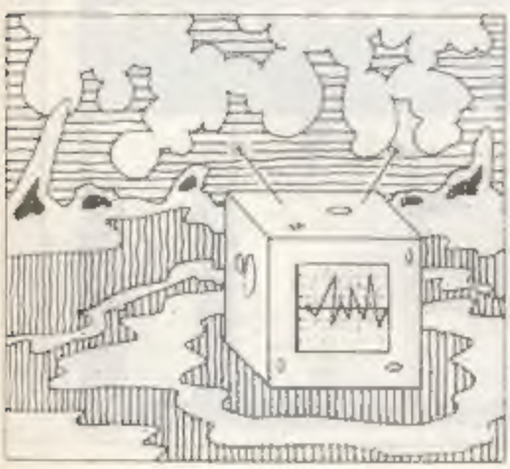

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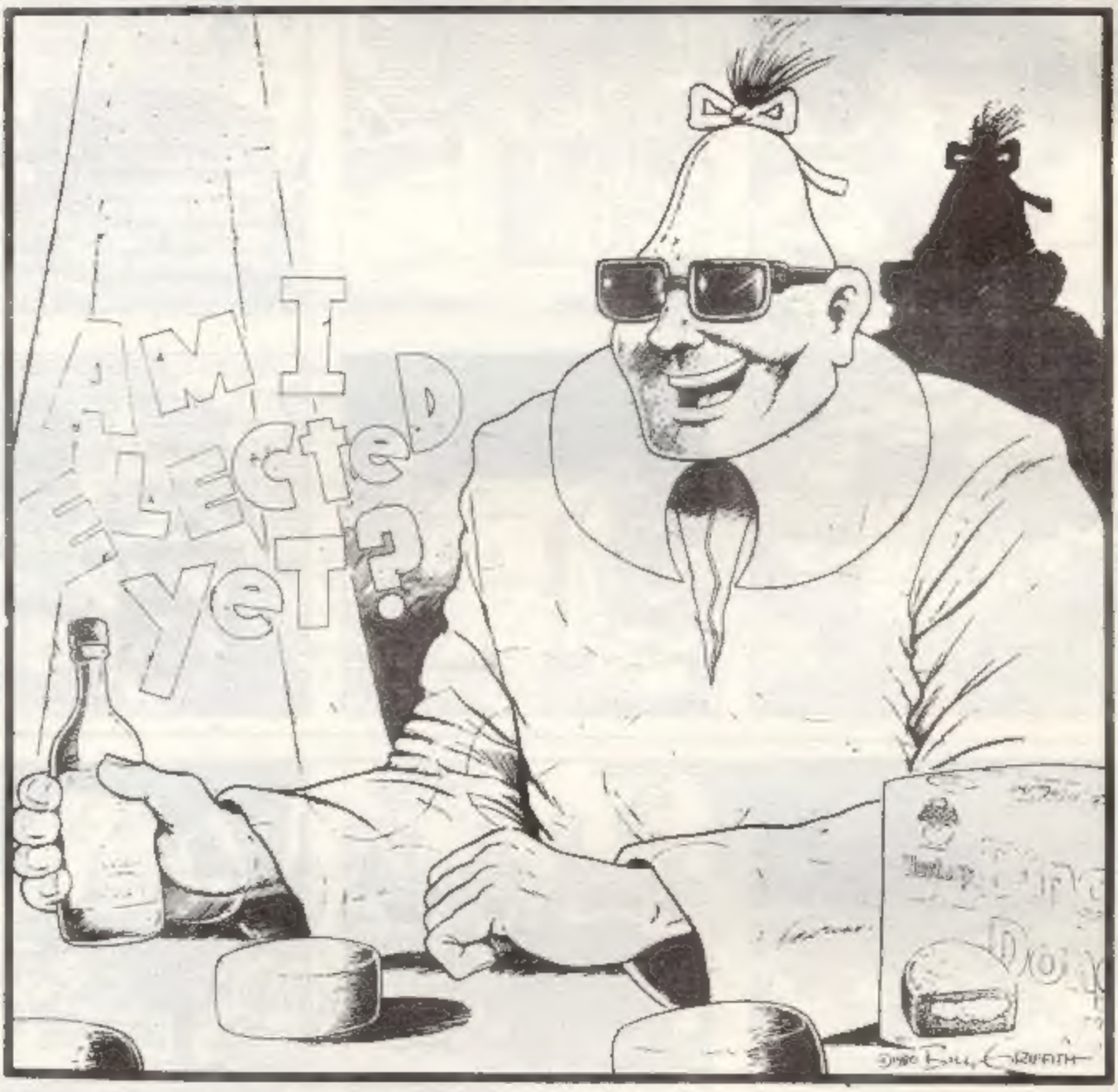
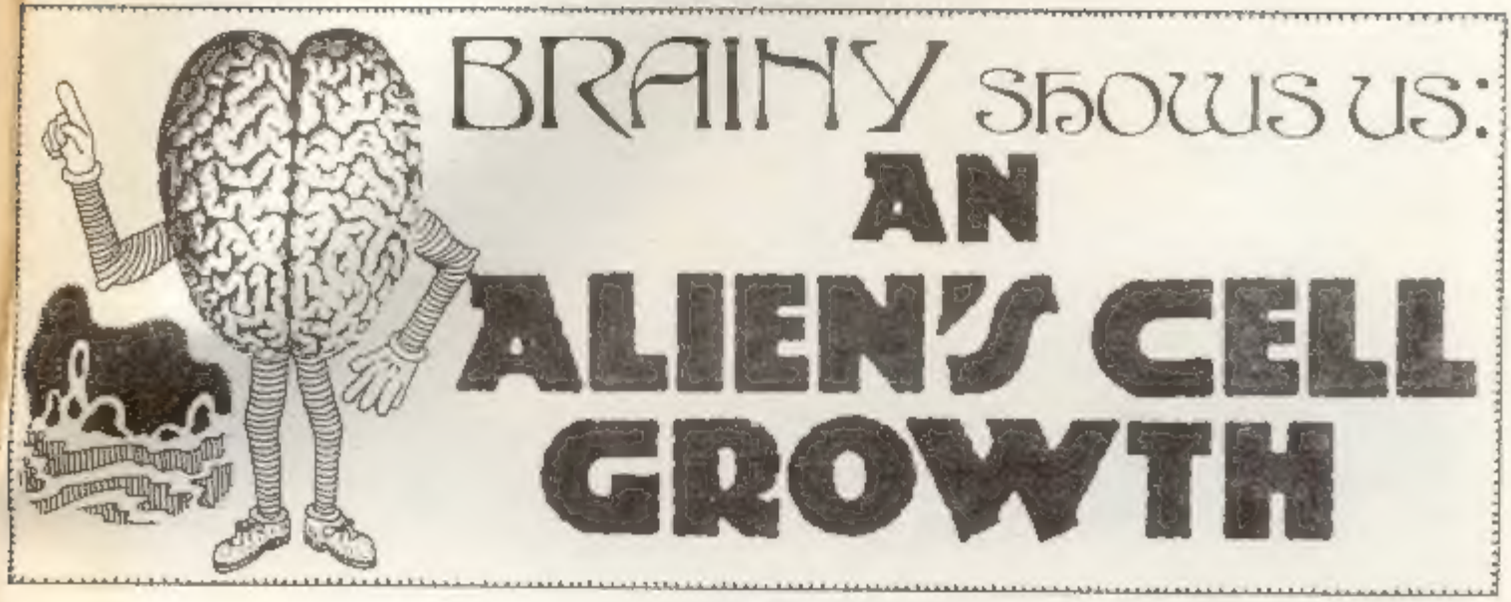
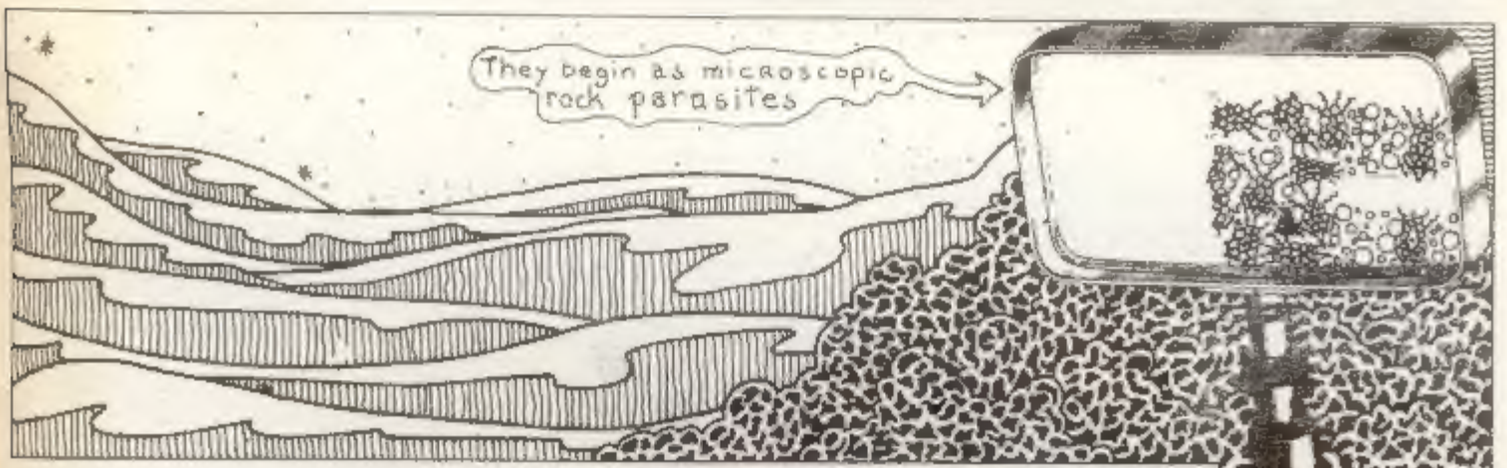
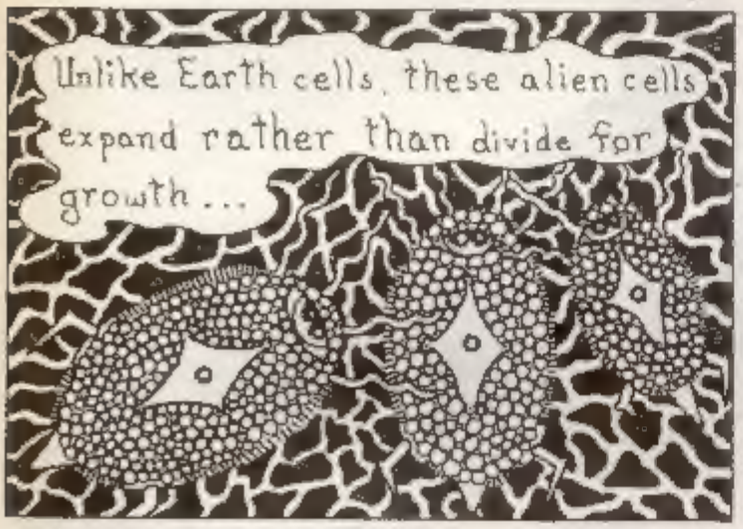


FOR PRESIDENT


BRAINY SHOWS US:
AN ALIEN'S CELL GROWTH


They begin as microscopic rock parasites


Unlike Earth cells, these alien cells expand rather than divide for growth...

As they grow older, they grow larger.

They inhabit caves for protection from the harsh environment...

Feeding from the atmosphere alone...
The End
By
1980©

Perovich
& Biondi